

Take Back the CLC Vote Hassan for CLC President!

As workers and unions, we are facing a massive and unprecedented right wing attack. Labour and employment standards, collective bargaining rights, and the right of workers to organize and be politically active, are all targets of right wing governments at the federal and provincial levels.

We are in a fight for our survival as a force for progressive social change in Canadian society.

Either we rebuild our movement, or risk becoming increasingly irrelevant.

I believe in order to win we must work differently. Our fight isn't simply a battle for "fairness" that can be solved through clever appeals to politicians or a glitzy branding exercise. We must be willing to listen to our own members – and place their experiences at the heart of our campaigns. We must empower our members to fight the battles that lie ahead.

We need leadership that is strong, transparent, democratic and inspiring. A leadership that is not afraid to give the CLC back to the workers, because there is nothing that bosses and this government fear more than an organized, united and worker-driven labour movement.

We must also be honest about what we're up against, and what we must do to prevail in tough times. We are facing an aggressive form of capitalism that has put a target on the back of every unionized and non-unionized worker, and anyone else standing in the way of corporate profits.

Nothing is sacred, and no one's job is safe. Our opponents will stop at nothing to strip away hard-won gains, and sacrifice them at the altar of corporate greed. Bosses and their allies at all levels of government have built a powerful political machine to make that happen.

But here's the good news: there's plenty of fightback potential in our movement, and in other movements who support us. In recent years, grassroots activism has won real gains. There is much we can learn from these successful struggles such as that of the Quebec students, Idle No More, the Toronto Library workers, the Chicago teachers and others.

We need a CLC President to empower and support that kind of local activism. We need someone who helps build the local leadership it takes to challenge someone like Stephen Harper, and his corporate backers. We need, quite simply, a bottom-up, grassroots movement and here's how I propose we begin:

1) Make the CLC Work for Workers

- Support provincial federations and labour councils and enable them to regain their role as centres of political action and mobilization at the provincial and local levels.

- Build solidarity and not walls between our affiliates and bring us all back to the table. Work with affiliate unions to organize meaningful strike support for unions on strike.
- Bring affiliates together to coordinate our organizing strategies.
- Work with affiliates to ensure all locals are affiliated and active in their labour councils.

2) Beyond Fairness: Developing an Independent Labour Vision

- Engage the membership at the grassroots level in identifying and articulating an independent political vision, one premised on the potential and ability of workers to make social change at all levels of our society.
- Transform the public debate on the basis of a new vision and a progressive alternative. We need to shift from continuously fighting defensive battles and be prepared to fight to win new victories that our children and future generations deserve.
- Build worker-to-worker solidarity across borders. Encourage a new era of concrete solidarity with fellow workers around the world. Global solidarity would not be restricted to resolutions and infrequent conferences.
- Engage in the electoral process on the basis of a clear labour agenda. We can best support our allies in Parliament, by mobilizing our members to defend our rights every day of the year.

3) Build Grassroots Workers Activism

- Develop an organizing strategy that engages the members, activists and the community.
- Build a broad-based movement that can effectively challenge the austerity agenda. Launch a pan-Canadian campaign to improve public services including healthcare, education, public transit, Canada Post and others.
- Empower the rank and file of our movement and give real voice to young workers, marginalized workers, activists and workers from equity seeking groups.